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The Southern California Clapper Rail Breeding on Fresh Water

BY G. WILLETT

SO far as I know the Southern California clapper rail (*Rallus levipes*) has been heretofore considered to inhabit only the salt marshes of the coast. I was therefore much surprised to flush a clapper rail from a small bunch of reeds on the edge of Nigger Slough, Los Angeles County, on May 29, 1906. On examining the bunch of reeds, which were growing in about 3 inches of water, I discovered a nest containing 3 fresh eggs undoubtedly of this species.

I left them and did not return until the evening of June 14. Approaching the nest carefully I succeeded in getting within about 8 feet of it before the bird flushed. She floundered thru the grass for about 30 feet and then took wing flying across the slough and was not again seen.

The nest contained nine eggs of which eight were about two-thirds incubated while the other was fresh or infertile. The nest and eggs, which are now in my collection, are typical of the species. The nest is a very loose affair, the foundation being composed of decayed tules and reeds and the upper part, containing the cavity, of broken bits of tule stalks. It measures 11 by 7 inches on the outside, with the cavity 5 by $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The eggs are creamy white spotted and blotched with umber and lavender, principally around the large end, the lavender markings having the appearance of being beneath the surface of the shell. The eggs measure: 1.57x1.15; 1.56x1.16; 1.61x1.14; 1.58x1.12; 1.61x1.14; 1.60x1.12; 1.59x1.15; 1.58x1.13; and 1.61x1.14.

Mr. O. W. Howard informs me that he has seen the clapper rail at Nigger Slough previously. I would like to know whether anyone else has found this species breeding on fresh water, or if this case may be regarded as exceptional.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Up the Yellowstone on a Pinto

BY GERARD ALAN ABBOTT

DURING my oological pursuits the shore-birds have always proved most fascinating. The prolonged, but extensive migrations, the deception displayed while nidification is in progress, and the unlimited variation of their exquisitely-marked eggs are notable characteristics.

Having become intimately acquainted with the Wilson phalarope, Bartramian sandpiper, and American woodcock, I cherished a desire to meet the long-billed curlew, a king among waders, in his natural elements.

Two other species, the magnificent ferruginous rough-leg and the sage-cock, prince of the grouse tribe, were of unusual interest to me. With visions of this nature I was lured to the foothills along the Yellowstone River, in Montana.

On the morning of May 18, 1906, I left camp, astride a pinto pony, and headed for Valley Creek. Curlews were whistling over the grassy slopes and the western meadow and desert horned larks abounded everywhere.

The season had been dry and the vegetation was short and stunted. I had no difficulty (from my elevated position on the pinto) in detecting nests of both larks, as the parent birds skulked from their treasures.